

SLC 63
CAMERON

SPEECHES

NATIVE LESBIANS, undated

Native lesbians

1/24



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THIS SPEECH IS ESPECIALLY FOR NATIVE PEOPLE AND FOR LESBIANS AND GAY MEN. FOR THOSE OF US WHO ATTEMPTED SUICIDE AS TEENAGERS BELIEVING WE WERE THE ONLY ONES, THE ONLY ONES IN ~~SMALLER THAN~~ ^{or rural areas} SMALL TOWNS. FOR THOSE OF US WHO WERE LESBIAN OR GAY BASHED BY MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILIES. FOR THOSE OF US WHO WERE KICKED OUT ~~OUR~~ ^{OK} OUR HOMES, DISOWNED BY OUR FAMILIES. FOR OUR FAMILIES, OUR GRANDPARENTS AND GREAT GRANDPARENTS WHO WERE TAKEN FROM THEIR HOMES AS CHILDREN AND WERE FORCED TO ATTEND WHITE BOARDING SCHOOLS FAR AWAY. FOR NATIVE PARENTS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR CHILDREN BECAUSE OF DEATH, ADOPTION, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND CHRISTIANITY. FOR THOSE OF US WHO STILL LIVE IN SHAME BECAUSE OF THE DENIAL OF WHO WE ARE BY OUR FAMILIES. FOR NATIVE CHILDREN WHO LIVE IN SHAME BECAUSE THEY ARE TAUNTED BY RACIST REMARKS, DENIED RESPECT AND LOVE. FOR NATIVE CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS ARE NOT WELL, WHOSE PARENTS ABUSE THEM BECAUSE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ADDICTION. FOR OUR CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN TAKEN AWAY BY COURTS AND FORMER SPOUSES. FOR OUR LOVERS WHO CANNOT COME TO FAMILY GATHERINGS AND IF THEY DO, WE MUST FORSAKE THE SANCTITY OF OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER. FOR THOSE OF US WHO BELIEVE THAT WE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE FAMILIES, TO RAISE CHILDREN BECAUSE OF OUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION. FOR THOSE OF US WHOSE LOVERS HAVE DIED AND WE CANNOT SHARE OUR PAIN AND GRIEF WITH OUR FAMILIES. FOR THE THOUSANDS OF NATIVE YOUTH WHO HAVE DIED BEFORE THE AGE OF 18. FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE CHILDREN AND SUFFER THEIR ANGER AT US FOR BEING LESBIAN OR GAY. FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE BEEN COMMITTED TO INSTITUTIONS, SUBJECTED TO CRUEL TREATMENTS TO CURE US OF OUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION. FOR MY NATIVE PEOPLE WHO ARE LOCKED AWAY IN PRISONS FOR LIFETIMES BECAUSE OF THE INJURIES OF INJUSTICE. FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE BECAUSE OF RACISM, HOMOPHOBIA, SELF-HATRED AND DESTITUTION. FOR LESBIANS AND GAY MEN IN PRISONS WHO FEAR BRUTAL ATTACKS. FOR THOSE OF US WHO CANNOT BRING OUR LOVERS TO WORK-RELATED EVENTS. FOR MY NATIVE PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF ANY PEOPLE IN OUR OWN LAND.

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FOR THOSE OF US WHO CAN ONLY SAY OUR LOVER IS A FRIEND OR ROOMMATE ON HOSPITAL FORMS. FOR NATIVE PEOPLE WHO LACK ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE. FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE CHILDREN AND HAVE BEEN CALLED BREEDERS BY OTHER LESBIANS AND GAY MEN. ⁽³⁾ FOR THE COUNTLESS NATIVE WOMEN WHO WERE INVOLUNTARILY STERILIZED. FOR THOSE OF US WHO ARE OLD AND ABANDONED IN ELDERLY HOME CARE SITUATIONS AND ~~ON~~ ^{NO} ONE COMES TO US. FOR OUR NATIVE GRANDPARENTS AND GREAT GRANDPARENTS WHO DIED WITH DEEP AND PROFOUND SADNESS BECAUSE OF THE LOSSES, BECAUSE OF THE LIES. FOR THOSE OF US WHO LIVE ALONE WITHOUT COMMUNITY OR FAMILY SUPPORT. FOR THOSE OF US WHO ARE BATTERED BY OUR LOVERS, DOMESTIC PARTNERS, SPOUSES AND ARE AFRAID TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE BEEN MURDERED DUE TO HOMOPHOBIA AND INDIAN-HATING. ⁽¹⁾

JUSTICE, FREEDOM, SOVEREIGNTY, AUTONOMY, ACCEPTANCE, RECONCILIATION, TRUTH, RESPONSIBILITY. THESE WORDS REVEAL SOME OF WHAT WE SEEK AND UNDERSTAND TO BE OUR HERITAGE, OUR FUTURE. ^{later}

TRUTH IS DEEP BLUE SEAS, GREEN LUSH TREES, ~~RED~~ ^{Red} ROCKY BROWN HILLS, FALLING ^{Down} WATERFALLS, SLOW MOVING RIVERS, PINK, YELLOW, TURQUOISE SUNSETS, BIRDS IN SPRING, AVALANCHES IN WINTER. IT CASCADES DOWN UPON US, BREAKING INTO PIECES, ROCKS HITTING HARD, TUMBLING DOWN TO THE BOTTOM, TO THE CORE.

TRUTH TAKES US TO DEEP SPACE, TO STARS IN THE NIGHT SKY. IT BLAZES LIKE ^{red} THE SUN, BURNING, CATCHING FIRE, SEARING AND SCORCHING.

IT ~~IS LIKE~~ ^{THE} A FULL MOON, ILLUMINATING THE TINIEST PLANTS IN THE DESERT, ^{REVEALING} ~~ILLUMINATING~~ INSECTS RESTING UNDERNEATH. TRUTH IS STARK, SPARE, PRICKLY AS CACTUS, CUTTING DEEP INTO OUR HANDS, OUR FACES, OUR HEARTS.

THE EARLY MORNING MIST OF THE FOREST SHROUDS US, PROTECTS US BUT TRUTH BREAKS THROUGH ECHOING THE HAUNTING CALLS OF ELK, BREAKS THROUGH LIKE BULLETS SMACKING INTO BEAUTIFUL FUR, BREAKS THROUGH LIKE DEER, MOOSE, CARIBOU, WOLVES FALLING TO THEIR DEATH, LEAVING THEIR FAMILIES TO UNDERSTAND AND GRIEVE, SPLATTERING THEIR LIVES, THEIR BLOOD, THEIR TRUST ONTO PRISTINE SNOW.

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DUSTY ROADS LEAD US AWAY FROM THAT PLACE ALONG THE RIVER, FAR AWAY. WE
WALK ALONG, GLANCING BACK, IGNORING SHADOWS THAT FOLLOW US.

TRUTH LIES IN WRINKLES ON OUR FACES, FROWNS, FURROWED BROWS. THE FACE

① For those of us who are healing, ^{for those of us seeking} recovering, truth
trying to be good people, for those of us
who ~~are~~ hate our families, for all of us
who have suffered in the name of family,
in the name of god, in the name of
the U.S. government.

Telling the truth of our lives, we become
targets, walking on hills of prairie, lightning
seeks us out, to strike us dead, never
again to speak. We run fast, seeking
serenity, seeking a state of grace. Seeking
a place that will not betray us, hurt us,
cheat us, abuse us, destroy us. ~~we~~

~~Looking~~
The colors of truth reveal its dimensions,
its depths -

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THE EARLY MORNING MIST OF THE FOREST SHROUDS US, PROTECTS US BUT TRUTH
BREAKS THROUGH ECHOING THE HAUNTING CALLS OF ELK, BREAKS THROUGH LIKE BULLETS
SMACKING INTO BEAUTIFUL FUR, BREAKS THROUGH LIKE DEER, MOOSE, CARIBOU, WOLVES
FALLING TO THEIR DEATH, LEAVING THEIR FAMILIES TO UNDERSTAND AND GRIEVE,
SPLATTERING THEIR LIVES, THEIR BLOOD, THEIR TRUST ONTO PRISTINE SNOW.

DUSTY ROADS LEAD US AWAY FROM THAT PLACE ALONG THE RIVER, FAR AWAY. WE
WALK ALONG, GLANCING BACK, IGNORING SHADOWS THAT FOLLOW US.

THERE IS THE FEELING OF COMING HOME

ON THE TOP OF THIS HILL

BELOW WINDS THE RIVER

WE HAVE TRAVELED FOR MANY MILES

BUT ONLY AT THIS PLACE IS THERE HOME.

THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN SAY THAT WILL MAKE ME BELIEVE YOU AGAIN]?

THE SUN SHINE THROUGH YOU LIKE BARE BRANCHES

THE DAY STINGS WITH HEAT

BUT THERE IS NO COMFORT LEANING AGAINST A BARE TREE

WHAT I MISS, LONG FOR

REFLECTS IN THE SHIMMERING LIGHT

STARS HAVE GATHERED TO GREET ME

SOMETIMES THEY SEND A HAWK OR AN EAGLE

FLYING SLOWLY OVERHEAD UNTIL WE HAVE CROSSED

YOU ARE LIKE DEAD GRASS ON THE HILL

SHADOWS FROM CLOUDS ARE YOUR ONLY COMPANIONS

IT USED TO BE GREEN

BIRDS USED TO SIT THERE

